

New Horizons

Volume 5 | Issue 2

Article 1

2021

Full Issue

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/newhorizons>

Recommended Citation

(2021) "Full Issue," *New Horizons*: Vol. 5 : Iss. 2 , Article 1.

Available at: <https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/newhorizons/vol5/iss2/1>

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in New Horizons by an authorized editor of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact rscroggin@scu.edu.

At a Crossroads

Volume 5 Issue 2

NEW HORIZONS

A Peer-reviewed Graduate Journal
Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 Table of Contents
- 4 Letter from the Editor
Barbara Anne Kozee
- 5 Editorial Board Biographies
- 7 Acknowledgements
- 9 Homiletic Reflection on Anti-Asian Racism
Aaron Bohr, SJ
- 15 Women's Silenced Anger: A Feminist Reading of Susanna
Elise Dubravec
- 31 The McCarrick Report as a Step in Reconciliation and Reform
Amirah Orozco
- 45 Toward a Synodal Parish: Practical Methods for Fostering Synodality
Mark Guevarra
- 61 Author Biographies
- 63 Call for Papers: Volume 6 Issue 1

NEW HORIZONS

Volume 5 Issue 2



Letter from the Editor

By Barbara Anne Kozee

After over a year of living in the COVID-19 pandemic, we are at a crossroads: it is time to decide whether we are going back to normal or whether we will make significant changes to our values, structures, and lifestyles. In the last issue of *New Horizons*, the Editorial Board commented on the themes of crossing roads present in the parable of the Good Samaritan as read by Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti*. The Board discusses encounters on the road as acts of love, as an “acknowledgment of the fundamental truth that we are all children of God and that we cannot remain isolated from the suffering that is experienced around us. This also allows us to recognize that love is more than just a series of actions but has its ‘source in a union increasingly directed towards others, considering them of value, worthy, pleasing and beautiful...’ (FT 94).” For Francis, love requires that we engage with the signs of the times in a fraternal spirit that is not afraid of suffering or social change.

Hermeneutically similar to *Fratelli Tutti*, this issue begins with a homiletic reflection on anti-Asian racism by Aaron Bohr, SJ. This reflection grounds us in our social context and the grave rise in anti-Asian hate crimes during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the shooting of eight people in Atlanta, Georgia, six of whom were Asian women. Bohr invites us into the suffering of the Asian and Asian American communities living in the United States. Elise Dubravec provides a feminist exegesis that considers the figure of Susanna as “fuming with anger,” a reading that provides agency to women who have experienced sexual violence. Amirah Orozco writes a compelling analysis of The McCarrick Report through the lens of Pope Francis’s theology of conflict in *Fratelli Tutti* and Jon Sobrino’s theology of honesty with and fidelity to the real. And finally, Mark Guevarra articulates practical methods for fostering greater relationship and mutual understanding in the synodal parish, bringing the themes of *Fratelli Tutti* from theory to practice.

Each of these papers is incredibly loyal to Francis’s mandates in *Fratelli Tutti*. The Asian American community, women, survivors of clergy sex abuse, and the ‘other’ in the parish are indeed considered “of value, worthy, pleasing, and beautiful.” While at a crossroads, these students nudge us toward who to encounter and what to consider. They model the love that is active in society and that can and should lead to personal and structural conversions of heart.

Editorial Board

Editor



Barbara Anne Kozee

Barb Kozee (she/her) is a third year Master of Divinity student concentrated in Christian social ethics. She comes to JST with a background in International Political Economy. In her academic scholarship, Barb aims to bring together the fields of theology and the social sciences.

Editorial Board

Stanley Goh, SJ



Stanley Goh, SJ, is a Jesuit from Singapore and is completing his Licentiate in Sacred Theology at JST. He has an academic background in Political Science, Philosophy, Education and Theology. An educator at heart, he continues to dabble academically in the philosophy of education, experiential learning, and practical theology.

MyLan Metzger



MyLan Metzger is an online Master in Theological Studies student. MyLan's interests are in the intersection of faith and politics and in Catholic social teaching education. Living in North Carolina, she is the Director of Social Justice and Outreach for the Catholic campus ministry at Duke University.

Alyssa Moore



Alyssa Moore is a third year Master of Divinity student at JST. She has an academic background in both theology and environmental science, and is currently a 2020-2021 Fellow with CreatureKind, an interdenominational organization exploring the intersections of faith, farmed animal welfare, and other social justice issues. Her recent work in ecotheology and Catholic thought will be published as a chapter in the forthcoming volume *Valuing Lives, Healing Earth*.

Joel Thompson, SJ



Joel Thompson SJ, is a Guyanese Jesuit and a third year Master of Divinity student at JST. He holds a BSc. in Electrical Engineering and a B.A. in Philosophy and Theology. His master's degree is in Environment and Development. Academically, he is interested in questions at the intersection of religion, development, and ecology. Most of his previous research and work has been centered on young adult ministry with an emphasis on environmental and social justice.

Anne Kallin Zehren



Anne is a MTS student, following a career in media (NBC, Newsweek) and as a start-up entrepreneur (Teen People, Current TV and Common Sense Media). She has served on a variety of boards, including advising President Clinton on youth violence and teen pregnancy, and as board V.P. of Alpha Sigma Nu. Anne hopes to an "entrepreneur for the Holy Spirit" by finding new ways to make spirituality more culturally relevant and accessible. She lives in Oakland with her son.



Acknowledgements

The Editorial Board would like to thank JST faculty and staff who contributed to Volume 5 of New Horizons. We are grateful for your support.

Publisher

Dean Joseph Mueller, SJ

Faculty Advisor

John Endres, SJ

Faculty Reviewers

Marianne Farina, CSC

Eduardo Fernández, SJ

George Griener, SJ

Christopher Hadley, SJ

James Nati

Julie Rubio

Homiletic Reflection on Anti-Asian Racism

Aaron Bohr, SJ

Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University (Berkeley, CA)

This homily was given on March 28, 2021, Palm Sunday of Holy Week, in reaction to an escalation in anti-Asian hate crimes during the COVID-19 pandemic and a mass shooting on March 16, 2021 in Atlanta, Georgia that resulted in the deaths of eight people, six of whom were Asian women.

Our readings today focus on the self-giving love of Christ. St. Paul writes of Christ Jesus as emptying himself, coming in our likeness, and walking the way of the Cross. Today's Psalm captures the anguish of Holy Week. The Psalmist cries out to God in lament. A lamentation is a prayer of grief and anguish, a walk deep into the depths of utter sadness and loss. Yet, it is also a prayer of hope and trust in God. It ends on a note of praise: "in the midst of the assembly I will praise you," the Psalmist proclaims. As our Lenten journey enters Holy Week and the holiest days of the Christian year, I would like to reflect for a moment on anti-Asian racism and the shootings in Atlanta. My own prayer throughout these latter weeks of Lent has been to spend time with Christ, who knows suffering, grief, and loss. Many voices within the Asian American community have been encouraging us to share our stories and to reflect upon our collective history. Pope Francis has encouraged Jesuits to engage in the prayer of memory, to see how God has been active in our lives. My prayer of memory is not unlike those of other Asian Americans, especially those of mixed heritage, who have felt both included and excluded from the American narrative.

The Asian American community is incredibly diverse. One of my Jesuit friends, who is from Singapore, found the use of the term Asian American totally foreign to his experience. "I am a Singaporean," he said. He and I would talk about our Chinese families living in the British

BOHR: HOMILETIC REFLECTION ON ANTI-ASIAN RACISM

Empire, his in Singapore and Malaysia and mine in Jamaica. We traded stories of great aunts who spoke proper British English and other Anglophile relatives. Arriving in the United States, my family has been adopted by Asian America, even though by nationality and culture my mother's family is Jamaican. Yet, we are often defined by our racial appearance, even though we no longer speak Chinese as a native language. The term "Asian American" includes ethnic groups who would not be natural allies in Asia. Japan and Korea have a fraught history. My Vietnamese brothers in my Jesuit community are very suspicious of China. For Asians in the United States, race and appearance take precedence, even though we come from all parts of the globe.

In the first weeks of the pandemic, I began to hear stories of anti-Asian rhetoric and violence. Reports began to surface, mainly in New York and here in the Bay Area, where I am studying. These reports became more and more frequent. They became more violent: the stabbing of a Burmese American family in Texas, acid thrown on the face of a Chinese American woman in Brooklyn. The San Francisco Chronicle wrote about a Chinese American woman who was spat upon as she walked home from the gym. Right before the lockdown started, my sister Jessica called. We had a long talk about the pandemic and the increasing rise of anti-Asian rhetoric. I told her that we needed to patronize Chinese restaurants because they were reporting dramatic declines in revenue because people associated China and anything Chinese with the coronavirus. Shortly after our conversation, my sister sent my mother and me text messages. She was in a Chinese restaurant ordering take out. She reported that a white woman was glaring at her. The anti-Asian rhetoric and attacks had now impacted my family directly. As the lockdown began, I felt a feeling of fear and dread about the anti-Chinese and anti-Asian sentiment. Attacks against people of Asian descent were not limited to the US. Reports from

BOHR: HOMILETIC REFLECTION ON ANTI-ASIAN RACISM

Europe, Australia, and Africa began circulating in the press. The Chinese community in France began the #JeNeSuisPasUnVirus or #IAmNotAVirus. The governments of China and Korea issued advisories to their citizens living abroad.

The situation grew worse as President Trump intentionally called COVID-19 the “China virus” and the “kung flu.” Many politicians began to use the same rhetoric, dismissing those of us who were offended as being too sensitive. But for those of us who were bullied, punched, and shunned as children because we were of Asian descent, such rhetoric brought back painful memories. As I looked back on my experience, I was shocked to realize that every year I have heard anti-Asian comments and have been the target of many microaggressions. In some Jesuit communities, whenever I cook it is deemed “exotic.” Creative solutions to problems are attributed to secret Oriental powers. Such comments deny my humanity because my attributes and characteristics become racialized.

In order to understand this current moment in time, we must understand American history. All too often, Asian Americans have been erased from American history. Here in San Francisco, Chinese were blamed for an outbreak of the bubonic plague in 1900. Chinese were quarantined in Chinatown. When they did fall sick, they were not admitted to local hospitals. The Chinese community’s response was to found the Chinese Hospital, which is still going strong to this day and has done much to ensure the well being of the local Chinese American community in the midst of the pandemic.

It is also important to understand the impacts of the Page Act of 1875, especially in light of the shootings in Atlanta. The Page Act had the effect of characterizing Chinese men as coolies, that is cheap labor, and Chinese women as prostitutes. The Page Act sought to bar their migration to the United States. This was solidified in the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which

BOHR: HOMILETIC REFLECTION ON ANTI-ASIAN RACISM

barred most Chinese from immigrating to the United States. From our windows here in the Jesuit community, I can look out at Angel Island. Angel Island has been characterized as the Ellis Island of the West. But it was far from Ellis Island. Here immigrants from China, and later from Japan and other parts of Asia, were held and detained, sometimes for up to two years. Most women were barred entry. One can still see the poignant poems carved in the barracks. It was described by one Chinese American woman who passed through it as a child as a very sad and lonely place. I made a pilgrimage to Angel Island with another Jesuit in the fall of last year. We went from one part of the immigration center to the other, very much like making the Stations of the Cross. We finished our time there at a wall of memorials from descendants of those who passed through Angel Island, commemorating the sacrifices and hopes of those who have gone before. It was not until 1943 that the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed. However, it established a very strict quota system of 105 Chinese persons per year. Importantly, this was based not on nationality but on race.

Violence against the Chinese and Asian American community is not new. In 1871, there was a mass lynching of Chinese men in Los Angeles. In 1886, the Chinese community of Seattle was driven out. They were forced to board ships to take them away from the city. This was one of many “drivings out” here in the American West, in which Chinese communities were forced to flee. Similarly, the Japanese Americans were interned during WWII, their loyalties to the United States questioned simply because of their ancestry. In 1982, Vincent Chin was murdered in Detroit because he was mistaken for being Japanese, and Japan at that time was blamed for the decline of the American auto industry. His murderers received probation and a \$3,000 fine. In 1989, young children of Southeast Asian ancestry were gunned down at Cleveland Elementary School in Stockton, CA. As is the case of the shooting in Atlanta, calling this attack racially

BOHR: HOMILETIC REFLECTION ON ANTI-ASIAN RACISM

motivated has been dismissed by many. The Atlanta shootings on March 16, 2021 occurred on the anniversary of the MyLai Massacre, in which Vietnamese women were sexually assaulted by American troops and then massacred, along with their children.

The shootings in Atlanta and the vicious attacks on Asian American elders have left the Asian American community reeling. My own reaction when I saw the news felt like I had been kicked in the stomach. “It’s a hate crime,” I said to myself before I even read the story. The Atlanta shooting is unfortunately part of a longer history of violence towards Asians and Asian Americans. Such violence has skyrocketed during the pandemic by 150%.

As we pray about and reflect upon the racism directed towards the Asian American community, let us walk through the pain and the sadness together. I invite you to consider responding to anti-Asian racism by writing to your Congressional representative and senators urging them to support legislation aimed at protecting the Asian American community. Reach out to Asian American friends and family members to see how they have been. Read about Asian America and Asian American history. Pray with Asian representations of Christ and the Blessed Mother and notice what that’s like. As Christ responded to hatred with love and infinite compassion, let us do the same, working for God’s kingdom one step at a time.

Women's Silenced Anger: A Feminist Reading of Susanna

Elise Dubravec

Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University (Berkeley, CA)

Abstract

The story of Susanna tells of a woman sexually assaulted, accused of adultery, sentenced to death, and then saved by the prophet Daniel. Throughout the narrative, Susanna seems passive while she endures this dire experience. Underneath her outwardly submissive behavior and silence characteristic of biblical women, she is, I suggest, fuming with anger. This exegesis challenges Susanna's historically docile interpretation by reading the story through a feminist lens of women's anger. After problematizing common interpretations of Susanna's character, I offer an empowered reading of Susanna that imbues her with agency by shifting attention to her anger. Within this interpretation, Susanna's narrative has the potential to speak to the experience of millions of women who have endured sexual violence.

Introduction

The story of Susanna accompanies the Book of Daniel, appearing as an appendix in Chapter 13 of the book. Although the narrative is titled after Susanna, Daniel remains the protagonist,¹ while Susanna is framed passively. In this paper, I offer a reading of Susanna that questions the reliability of the narrator, embracing a hermeneutic of feminist suspicion that places Susanna at the center of her own experience. Underneath her outwardly submissive behavior and silence, she is, I suggest, fuming with anger. Indeed, her narrative speaks to the experience of millions of women who have endured sexual violence. I challenge Susanna's docile appearance by reading the story against the grain, through the lens of women's anger.

¹ John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 426.

Context

Susanna's story begins by naming her husband and identifying Susanna as a beautiful, pious woman. On her husband's grand estate, she walks frequently in the garden. Two men, who are judges within the Jewish community, see her every day in the garden and lust after her (vv. 2-14). One day, Susanna decides to bathe in the garden and the judges hide to watch her. When she is alone, they reveal themselves and harass her to have sex with them. They give her an ultimatum: give in to their desires or be falsely accused of adultery and executed (vv. 15-21). She refuses, for she would rather die than have sex with them. Shouting ensues from both Susanna and the men. Her servants rush into the garden and the judges begin their accusations (vv. 22-27). They gather the community at her husband's house to begin her trial of execution. Susanna is stripped naked in front of her family and community. The judges' false testimony is believed because of their rank and authority (vv. 28-41). Susanna does not testify but prays to God. Hearing her prayer, God inspires the young prophet, Daniel, to intercede and investigate (vv. 42-46). Through a cross-examination of the judges, Daniel reveals the truth, and they are executed instead of Susanna (vv. 51-62).

Interpretations of Susanna

"A very beautiful woman"

Susanna is not given many characteristics or much character development in the biblical text. In fact, her physical appearance possesses more narrative power than Susanna herself. Her beauty is the focal point and the reason behind the conflict: it compels men to objectify her and leads to her attempted rape. From a feminist perspective, this interpretation is problematic for several reasons. The irresistible beauty motif invites and enables the male gaze, which can

present itself in three ways: “the gaze *in* the text (of male characters at female characters), the gaze *of* the text (of presumably male authors, through their narrators, at their literary creations and the rest of the world), or the gaze *at* the text (of readers at a text and its characters).”² It is possible to see all three of these components in the story of Susanna. In the text, the gazes of the two male judges are indicative of their desires to own and dominate Susanna. The narrative gaze of the text becomes clear in the description of the judges’ lust for Susanna and her bathing routine. She requests that her maids bring her “olive oil and ointments” so she can bathe (v. 17), a request that in an Ancient Near-Eastern narrative context would have had overtly sexual undertones. And thirdly, Susanna’s beauty is presented as entertainment for the reader. Susanna as the narrative object rather than subject allows readers to place themselves in the shoes of the judges.³ In these ways, a private bathing scene becomes a voyeuristic, misogynistic narration through the gazes of the judges, author, and reader.

“Feared the Lord and trained in the Law of Moses”

Because Susanna is possibly the daughter of a priest, the author may have been compelled to describe her as a pious woman (v.2) so that his later sexualization of her did not appear too corrupt.⁴ Susanna’s faith and education in the law serve as an advantage: they are what save her from rape and death. Her fear in God compels her to deny the judges’ forceful advances, as before the judges could overpower her, she “cried out with a loud voice” (v.24). The narrator would have been familiar with Deuteronomic law, which states that a woman being molested must cry out or else she carries blame (Deut 22:24).⁵ After Susanna cries out, her

² Caryn Tamber-Rosenau, “Biblical Bathing Beauties and the Manipulation of the Male Gaze: What Judith Can Tell Us about Bathsheba and Susanna,” *The Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 33.2, 2017, 58.

³ Ibid., 62.

⁴ Collins, 429.

⁵ Ibid., 431.

servants hear her and rush into the garden. Her faith has saved her from rape, but the outcome of her court trial is still uncertain.

Within the patriarchal society, Susanna did not have legal power to speak or defend herself. She remains quiet while the judges accuse her, but she creatively breaks silence by utilizing her spiritual power in a seemingly powerless situation.⁶ When Susanna speaks, it is in the form of a prayer that is powerful enough to change the plot.⁷ After God hears her prayer, God “stirred up the holy spirit” within Daniel (v. 45), who saves her. Daniel receives a significant amount of praise for saving Susanna. However, upon closer inspection, it is clear that Daniel would not have saved Susanna if it were not for her prayer. She prays in front of the entire court for all to hear (v. 42). Daniel must have heard this prayer, yet he does not act until God intervenes. If Susanna did not pray, would God have saved her? Elma Cornelius suggests that Susanna gained spiritual power by giving up her own power.⁸ While this expression of Susanna’s faith may appear encouraging to those seeking feminist interpretations, I believe that we should be cautious with how this interpretation could cause further damage to survivors of sexual violence. Daniel, in a way, was *given* power and motivation by God to become the story’s savior. Susanna was left to maintain her submissive position, waiting for God to intervene. This conveys a troubling message that identifying as a spiritually powerful woman requires remaining passive in distressing or violent situations. What changes when women claim a God-given power to act on their own behalf in the world in addition to claiming their own spiritual power?

⁶ Elma Cornelius, “What kind of power can build society? A remarkable power play in Susanna,” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 75(3), 2019, 4.

⁷ Marx, 227.

⁸ Cornelius, 4

“Woman of great refinement”

Susanna's husband is a wealthy man. This is evident in the garden attached to his estate. We know that Susanna profits from this wealth because she has servants who help with tasks such as preparing her bath. However, this wealth is not her own. In her position, she did not personally own any material possessions. Her value and refinement are defined by her success as a wife and mother.⁹ In early artistic depictions of Susanna, she was painted as a woman of marital chastity, a representation that places the responsibility of chastity and spousal commitment on the shoulders of women.¹⁰ The devotion of a wife to her husband is then held to the standard of martyrs' faithfulness to God. She chooses death over adultery. Susanna is used as a model to train women to be “sexual gatekeepers, responsible for the proper regulation of men's sexuality.”¹¹ Susanna truly gatekeeps by ordering servants to “shut the garden doors” for privacy (v.17). After she screams to alert her servants of the judges' presence, one judge runs to open the gate, signifying an inability to keep their own chastity in check (v. 25).

Susanna's refinement is further expressed through the veil that she dons as she enters her trial (v. 31-32). The veil is ultimately stripped from her body, denoting her alleged failure in marital chastity. I assert that this act of forced nakedness is a form of sexual violence. The judges failed in raping her; therefore, in a desperate, final attempt to see her naked form, they unveil her and “feast on her beauty” (v. 32). Here, the male gaze derives great pleasure by defiling a chaste, refined woman. Susanna was legally and socially unattainable, but by unveiling her, they continued to satisfy their voyeuristic pleasure.

⁹ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰ Babette Bohn, “Rape and the Gendered Gaze: ‘Susanna and the Elders’ in Early Modern Bologna,” in *Biblical Interpretations*, 9(3), 2001, 261.

¹¹ Karen Ross, Megan K. McCabe, and Sara Wilhelm Barbers, “Christian Sexual Ethics and the #MeToo Movement: Three Moments of Reflection on Sexual Violence and Women's Bodies,” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 39(2), (2019), doi: 10.5840/jsce201939238, 344.

Susanna as Temptress

As scholars began to study Susanna, her model of female virtue morphed into seduction and temptation.¹² This evolution of the story's analysis was influenced by the development of artistic expression and cultural attitudes toward sex. In the early Renaissance period, paintings that depicted female nudity captivated male art enthusiasts. Concurrently, rape was not a serious crime.¹³ Therefore, male patrons and artists "identified more with the villainous elders than with the heroine."¹⁴ Susanna became an alluring temptress, beguiling those who gazed at her beauty. Tertullian, a church father, believed Susanna was to blame for what transpired because her bathing and nakedness welcomed the attention.¹⁵ Other paintings combined her enticing sensuality with her piety. As she is gazing upwards with a heavenly light, her clothing barely covers her naked body. Her piety and chastity are distorted by subtle, provocative imagery.¹⁶ Interpreting Susanna as a temptress is being complicit in her sexual assault and unjustly holds her accountable for the sins of others. Her attempts for privacy and her passivity in the conflict clearly indicate that the depraved attention was not welcomed, as some suggest. Susanna's silent and passive beauty, piety, and refinement in the text become distorted as temptation: she was asking for it.¹⁷

Susanna as Silent

Finally, the most striking characteristic about Susanna is her silence. She is harassed, assaulted, exposed, defiled, humiliated, and disbelieved. We come to know about her in the most

¹² Bohn, 261.

¹³ Ibid., 266.

¹⁴ Ibid., 267.

¹⁵ Tamber-Rosenau, 62.

¹⁶ Bohn, 279.

¹⁷ Jennie Grillo, "Seeing Silence: Susanna's Christological Quiet," in *Anglican Theological Review*, 99(4), 2016, 744.

DUBRAVEC: WOMEN'S SILENCED ANGER

intimate ways and yet she “repeatedly goes unheard.”¹⁸ We must first understand the harsh truths of living in her world before we begin to interpret the use of her silence. In Susanna’s historical, cultural, and religious setting, her silence is compliant with gender norms and fulfills what is expected of her as a woman in antiquity.¹⁹ Her withdrawal is pragmatic within the environment she lived in.²⁰ Women in this social context were constricted to their role as objects and property to men. She is not intended to be a strong presence but rather a “passive helper” to put the “male representative of a male God” at the center.²¹ Susanna’s silence is a narrative tool that paves the way for Daniel to rise as hero and prophet.

Susanna’s passivity can also be interpreted as a trauma response.²² The ordeal that she was forced through may have been too overwhelming for words to express. The fight or flight responses are commonly understood ways in which the body reacts to danger. However, the freeze response is another reaction that activates when neither fight nor flight will save one from threat.²³ Susanna may have assessed that any response, other than passivity and silence, would not have helped.

Silence can also be a response to shame,²⁴ something displayed throughout Susanna’s story. Her servants are ashamed when they find their mistress accused of fornication and adultery (v. 27). The community at the trial weeps when it sees her unveiled (v. 33). Once Susanna is found innocent, her family is relieved that shame did not fall upon her or the family (v. 63). The one person who is put under shame, however, does not appear to show shame at all. After the

¹⁸ Ibid., 742.

¹⁹ S. Philip Nolte, “A Politics of the Female Body. Reading Susanna (LXX Additions to Daniel) in a Brutalized South African Society,” in *BN NF 168*, (2016), 150.

²⁰ Grillo, 744.

²¹ Nolte, 149.

²² Grillo, 742

²³ Leon F. Seltzer, “Trauma and the Freeze Response: Good, Bad, or Both,” *Psychology Today*, (July 8, 2015), psychologytoday.com/us/blog/evolution-the-self/201507/trauma-and-the-freeze-response-good-bad-or-both.

²⁴ Grillo, 745.

judges unveil Susanna, they place their hands on her head. Susanna looks upward, not downward in submission (v. 34). By looking upward after this action, Susanna refuses shame.²⁵ She then breaks her silence and cries out her prayer.

Her motivation for rejecting shame, looking up, and praying may be a desire to embrace shamelessness.²⁶ However, I no longer want to ask why she is silent or to question the power of her silence. Instead, I want to ask *what is happening in her silence*. What is brewing in her soul while she is unveiled and accused? Her silence and prayer arise, I suggest, from an emotion that is negatively stigmatized for women. I believe that in Susanna's silence, there is a smoldering anger that serves as the deepest incentive guiding her prayer to God.

Anger in the Hebrew Bible

Concepts of anger have evolved throughout generations. It has been understood as a “natural response to painful situations,” “a disease of the mind,” a response to personal or social attack, and a physiological response to an emotional stimulus.²⁷ Each language and culture has its own unique ideas about and expressions of anger.²⁸ In the Hebrew Bible, anger frequently arises “as a response to disregarded authority” which informs us that anger “is reserved only for the few who hold positions of power.”²⁹ Considering women's inferior status to men and the cultural expectations of the time, it is no surprise that angry expression is only witnessed in biblical men. Anger in scripture presents itself in many forms, ranging from heat and facial

²⁵ Grillo, 746.

²⁶ Ibid., 747.

²⁷ Deena Grant, “Divine anger in Biblical Literature” (PhD diss., New York University, 2009), 3-7.

²⁸ Ibid., 6.

²⁹ Ibid., 12.

expressions to wind and water.³⁰ A feminist interpretation of these abstract descriptions can invite a broader and more creative understanding of anger as applied to Susanna.

In my reading of Susanna, I examine her emotional and physiological responses through the lens of anger framed by Beverly Wildung Harrison and Soraya Chemaly. Harrison's feminist moral theology defines anger as "a sign of some resistance in ourselves to the moral quality of the social relations in which we are immersed."³¹ Chemaly similarly assigns moral qualities to the emotion by distinguishing women's anger as a challenge to the status quo, something different from men's anger.³² Susanna was denied the opportunity to express anger as biblical men do. But if we believe that women in antiquity did not feel anger at all, I believe that we would lose enlightening and profound biblical interpretations.

Susanna's Anger

"Then Susanna groaned"

We encounter Susanna's first emotion when the judges approach her and give her the choice of sex or death. The text reads:

When the maids had gone out, the two elders got up and ran to her. They said, "Look, the garden doors are shut, and no one can see us. We are burning with desire for you; so give your consent and lie with us. If you refuse, we will testify against you that a young man was with you, and this was why you sent your maids away." Susanna groaned and said, "I am completely trapped. For if I do this, it will mean death for me; if I do not, I cannot escape your hands. I choose not to do it; I will fall into your hands, rather than sin in the sight of the Lord" (v. 19-23).

In Susanna's groan, I hear the groans of millions of women. I envision this as a groan of fear, annoyance, disgust, irritation, and anger. Harassment is so deeply engrained in the experience of

³⁰ Zacharias Kotzé, "Metaphors and Metonymies for Anger in the Old Testament: A Cognitive Linguistic Approach," in *Scriptura*, (2005), 119-123.

³¹ Beverly Wildung Harrison, "The Power of Anger in the Work of Love: Christian Ethics for Women and Other Strangers," in *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, Vol. 36, (1981), 49.

³² Soraya Chemaly, *Rage Becomes Her: The Power of Women's Anger*, (New York, NY: Atria), 2018, xvii.

women that we expect it as part of our lives. Women leave their homes everyday prepared to encounter harassment. In 2019, eighty-one percent of women in the United States reported having experienced some form of sexual harassment.³³ Susanna's historical context did not enforce laws that defended women's safety, even as modern protections can still leave much to be desired. In this way, we can hear Susanna's groan as an angered lament for all women who have been sexually harassed, assaulted, and violated.

"Through her tears she looked up toward Heaven, for her heart trusted in the Lord"

While many understand Susanna to be sad in this verse (v. 35), I suggest that Susanna's tears are ones of both sadness and anger. Angry tears are a psychological and physiological reaction to injustice. Psychologically, anger and sadness emerge in response to unjust treatment, hurt, or humiliation.³⁴ Physiologically, body heat rises when angry. As body temperature increases, there is an increased blood flow to the face and nose.³⁵ This change and irritation to the facial area can lead to eye and nasal fluids leaking. Sadness and anger can be physically emoted in similar ways, yet when we see this physiological response in women, we often assume sadness.

Women's anger challenges and dismantles gender norms,³⁶ and we have a responsibility to Susanna's dignity to imbue her with this gender-transgressing emotion. If Susanna had expressed anger as men express anger, there may have been serious consequences for her. As a result, we can imagine that Susanna made her rage insignificant and unnoticeable. Chemaly writes that "when we feel fear, or anger, or a combination of both, we often freeze, act confused,

³³ UC San Diego Center on Gender Equity and Health, "Measuring #MeToo: A National Study on Sexual Harassment and Assault," *Stop Street Harassment*, (April 2019), 10.

³⁴ Rebecca Joy Stanborough, MFA, "Why Do We Cry When We're Angry?" Healthline, (Sept. 29, 2020), [healthline.com/health/crying-when-angry](https://www.healthline.com/health/crying-when-angry).

³⁵ Grant, 16.

³⁶ Chemaly, xvii.

and stop talking in order to think. We become still and quiet.”³⁷ I believe Susanna's tears are a quiet rage. At her trial, she was exposed for all to see. Physically, emotionally, and spiritually naked, what was she to do? Her circumstances would make anyone angry.

“Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice”

As Susanna listens to the false charges against her, her anger grows inside her. Eventually, her anger boils over, unable to be contained, and she exclaims for all to hear, “O eternal God, you know what is secret and are aware of all things before they come to be; you know that these men have given false evidence against me. And now I am to die, though I have done none of the wicked things that they have charged against me!” (v. 42-43). This prayer is not only for God but also for her community.³⁸ A person who expresses anger and confronts others with the emotion is “demanding acknowledgment” and “asking for the recognition of their presence, their value.”³⁹ Susanna's anger is a signal to God and her community that something is wrong, as anger is an active emotion that motivates us toward justice and change.⁴⁰ Susanna's anger is present in her groans and her tears. And ultimately, her anger is what inspires her prayer and words. It is the underlying motivation that leads her to act via calling out to her God.

Susanna's Anger Today

The hope that I have for my reading of Susanna is for women to be able to look to biblical women and to find strength and solidarity. Women of faith have limited examples of biblical female empowerment. If we do, they are stories orbiting around the male narrative or displaying themes of femininity, chastity, sensuality, motherhood, and piety. Because there are

³⁷ Ibid., 147.

³⁸ Marx, 230.

³⁹ Harrison, 50.

⁴⁰ Chemaly, 5.

DUBRAVEC: WOMEN'S SILENCED ANGER

no overt, powerful examples of women expressing anger, we must exegete scripture through feminist and suspicious hermeneutics to find relatability. At the same time, it is important to be realistic about Susanna's historical context. Ultimately, this story is not hers. Rather, it is a story that uplifts chastity, faith in God, and Daniel's wisdom.⁴¹ We cannot completely save the story of Susanna, but we can become empowered by her justified and righteous anger. A feminist biblical framework that imagines women's anger is imperative for inspiring women to disrupt and resist cycles of repression, shame, and silence that still exist in society today, especially surrounding sexual violence.

Today, we see women leading social movements fighting to break such cycles. Tarana Burke, founder of #MeToo, and Patricia Cullors, co-founder of Black Lives Matter, are courageous women who have utilized their anger to protect women and people of color. In their conversation about anger and activism, Cullors said:

Most of us start this work because we're angry. We're angry about what's been done to us, we're angry about what we witnessed, we're angry about what we continue to witness, what hasn't been intervened on. And that anger becomes part of the emotional toolbox that lifts the work and drives the work. But I would also argue that you can't stay with just anger.⁴²

As a survivor of sexual abuse, Burke responded that anger is not the center of these movements: love is. Anger is merely a tool. She describes anger as “a jump-off or a place when you can get a spark, but the rest of it is driven by love and compassion and humanity and humility.”⁴³ In this way, anger does not oppose love. Rather, when our anger is rooted in love, it is a “mode of

⁴¹ Nolte, 156.

⁴² Tarana Burke and Patricia Cullors, “Anger, Activism, and Action,” *Elle*, (March 13, 2018), [elle.com/culture/career-politics/a19180106/patrisse-cullors-tarana-burke-black-lives-matter-metoo-activism/](https://www.elle.com/culture/career-politics/a19180106/patrisse-cullors-tarana-burke-black-lives-matter-metoo-activism/).

⁴³ *Ibid.*

connectedness to others” and “a vivid form of caring.”⁴⁴ It is an act of solidarity because it protects and cares for the vulnerable.⁴⁵

The anger of sexual assault survivors protects them and shapes the relationships and communities around them. Susanna’s anger not only protected her but also challenged her community, as those in power who abused her were brought to justice. Shaming, erasing, or silencing women’s anger only reveals the patriarchal social structures desperately clinging to power. Women’s anger, in the work of love, guides us on the arduous journey toward justice.

Conclusion

Susanna’s story depicts her as a beautiful, pious, refined woman, but her silence leaves her vulnerable to a history of sexualized interpretation. She is but a tool within a patriarchal context. But I believe we can learn from Susanna and become emboldened by her. By exploring a new question and delving into what is happening in Susanna’s silence, I have concluded that Susanna is angry. She has frozen in fear and, like many survivors of sexual violence, is denied the right to speak her truth. Therefore, she is left to simmer in rage, watching her accusers gaze at her body while her entire community condemns her to death. She finally breaks the silence, embraces her anger, and shouts in prayer to God, loud enough for all to hear.

Susanna’s silenced anger is emblematic of the experiences of many women today. Fear of rejection, marginalization, and negative consequences forces women to deny their anger in order to appease others. Susanna’s story and the abuse she endures can be a lesson for women: if we strive toward a just and feminist society, then the anger of the oppressed cannot be silenced. It is

⁴⁴ Ibid, 49.

⁴⁵ Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, Vatican.va, 115.

an instrument for claiming agency and power. Susanna shows us that women's anger is not destructive but rather fights "for the full gift of life"⁴⁶ amidst suffering.

Works Cited

- Bohn, Babette. "Rape and the Gendered Gaze: 'Susanna and the Elders' in Early Modern Bologna." *Biblical Interpretations*, 9(3). 2001.
- Burke, Tarana and Patricia Cullors. "Anger, Activism, and Action." *Elle*.
elle.com/culture/career-politics/a19180106/patrisse-cullors-tarana-burke-black-lives-matter-metoo-activism/.
- Chemaly, Soraya. *Rage Becomes Her: The Power of Women's Anger*. New York, NY: Atria. 2018.
- Collins, John J. and Adela Yarbro Collins. "Susanna." *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*. Ed. Frank Moore Cross. 1517 Media: Fortress Press.
- Cornelius, Elma. "What kind of power can build society? A remarkable power play in Susanna." *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 75(3). 2019.
- Francis. *Fratelli Tutti*. Vatican.va.
- Grant, Deena. "Divine anger in Biblical Literature" PhD diss., New York University, 2009.
- Grillo, Jennie. "Seeing Silence: Susanna's Christological Quiet." *Anglican Theological Review* 99(4). 2016.
- Harrison, Beverly Wildung. "The Power of Anger in the Work of Love: Christian Ethics for Women and Other Strangers." *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*. Vol. 36. 1981.
- Kotzé, Zacharias. "Metaphors and Metonymies for Anger in the Old Testament: A Cognitive Linguistic Approach." *Scriptura*. 2005.
- Marx, Dalia. "The Prayer of Susanna (Daniel 13)." *Ancient Jewish Prayers and Emotions: Emotions associated with Jewish prayer in and around the Second Temple period*. Eds. Stefan C. Reif and Renate Egger-Wenzel. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter. 2015.
- Merrill Willis, Amy C. "Susanna." *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*. 5th edition. Ed. Michael D. Coogan. New York, NY: Oxford Press. 2010.

⁴⁶ Harrison, 44.

DUBRAVEC: WOMEN'S SILENCED ANGER

- Nolte, S. Philip. "A Politics of the Female Body. Reading Susanna (LXX Additions to Daniel) in a Brutalized South African Society." *BN NF 168*. 2016.
- Ross, Karen, Megan K. McCabe, and Sara Wilhelm Barbers. "Christian Sexual Ethics and the #MeToo Movement: Three Moments of Reflection on Sexual Violence and Women's Bodies." *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 39(2). 2019.
- Seltzer, Leon F. "Trauma and the Freeze Response: Good, Bad, or Both." Psychology Today. psychologytoday.com/us/blog/evolution-the-self/201507/trauma-and-the-freeze-response-good-bad-or-both.
- Stanborough, Rebecca Joy. "Why Do We Cry When We're Angry?" Healthline. healthline.com/health/crying-when-angry.
- Tamber-Rosenau, Caryn. "Biblical Bathing Beauties and the Manipulation of the Male Gaze: What Judith Can Tell Us about Bathsheba and Susanna." *The Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 33.2. 2017.
- UC San Diego Center on Gender Equity and Health. "Measuring #MeToo: A National Study on Sexual Harassment and Assault." *Stop Street Harassment*. April 2019.

The McCarrick Report as a Step in Reconciliation and Reform

Amirah Orozco

Boston College (Boston, MA)

Abstract

In his latest encyclical, Fratelli Tutti, Francis puts forth an understanding of conflict that helps us to frame The McCarrick Report in the larger ecclesiological themes of Francis's pontificate. While many looked on and saw irreparable damage and risk to the reputation of the Church and its credibility, Francis saw the conflict as an opportunity for real reform. In the encyclical published only one month after the report, Francis writes that "pain and conflict transform us" (FT 226). This theology of conflict, available most succinctly in Chapter 7 of the document, is starkly contrasted to a fear of conflict. Instead, it posits conflict not only as inevitable, but indeed as constructive for Christian communities. For Francis, conflict is not something that must be shied away from by cover-ups or disinterest in reality, but instead the truth must be prioritized at all costs. In this paper, I will use Jon Sobrino's concepts of honesty with (or fidelity to) the real, forgiveness of the real, and the hope that is found in the real in order to argue that The McCarrick Report is a step in the healing and reconciliation of the Church. By reading both documents together, we can understand that instead of utter discord and crisis, Pope Francis sees what Sobrino refers to as "a hope that is made possible by reality itself." Francis inspires in the Church a hope that reform of structures that cause sinful realities is not only necessary, but possible. In a new way, Pope Francis is inviting the whole Church to listen to the clamors of survivors and victims of the systems of domination in which we live.

In August 2018, Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, former papal nuncio of the United States, penned an open letter that called on Pope Francis to resign over an alleged cover-up of Cardinal Theodore McCarrick's grave acts of sexual violence. Viganò accused Francis of ignoring repeated reports of the Cardinal, including one face-to-face with Viganò.¹ In response, Francis simply said that the letter "spoke for itself."² However, only a month later, Pope Francis ordered a thorough investigation of the events named and alluded to in the letter.³ In November

¹ Carlo Maria Viganò, *Testimony*, August 22 2019 (accessed March 24, 2021) <https://bit.ly/2Rhz439>.

² Chico Harlen, "Former Vatican ambassador says Popes Francis, Benedict knew of sexual misconduct allegations against McCarrick for years," *The Washington Post*, October 6, 2020 (accessed March 24, 2021) <https://wapo.st/3msB9Vh>.

³ Joshua J. McElwee, "Francis orders 'thorough study' of Vatican archives on McCarrick," *The National Catholic Reporter*, November 9, 2020 (accessed March 24) <https://bit.ly/3mpOTQV>.

OROZCO: THE MCCARRICK REPORT AS A STEP IN RECONCILIATION AND REFORM

2020, the Vatican released the fruits of this investigation in an almost 500-page document.⁴ The report was carried out as a direct order of Pope Francis, but it was not a spontaneous decision. Instead, it was largely the result of internal strife and political differences in the U.S. Catholic Church, which quickly turned into public spectacle. The report was carried out under the auspice of the Secretary of State and detailed the rise of former Cardinal McCarrick through the ranks of the Roman Catholic Church beginning in the 1970s until his removal from the priesthood in February 2019 when the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith found him guilty of “sins against the Sixth Commandment with minors and adults, with the aggravating factor of abuse of power.”⁵

In his latest encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, Francis puts forth an understanding of conflict which helps us to frame the report in terms of the larger ecclesiological themes of Francis’s pontificate. While many looked on and saw irreparable damage and risk to the reputation of the Church and its credibility, Francis saw an opportunity for real reform. In the encyclical published only one month after the report, Francis writes, “Pain and conflict transform us.”⁶ This theology of conflict, available most succinctly in Chapter 7 of the document, is starkly contrasted to a fear of conflict. Instead, it posits conflict not only as inevitable, but indeed constructive for Christian communities. For Francis, conflict is not something that must be shied away from by cover-ups or disinterest in reality, but instead conflict must be faced through the prioritization of truth at all costs. I will use Jon Sobrino’s concepts of honesty with (or fidelity to) the real, forgiveness of the real, and the hope that is found in the real in order to argue that The McCarrick Report is a

⁴ Secretary of State of the Holy See, “Report on the Holy See’s Institutional Knowledge and Decision-Making Related to Former Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick (1930-2017)” (Vatican City: Holy See, Secretary of State, 2020).

⁵ Joshua J. McElwee, “The Vatican’s McCarrick report: a timeline of events,” *The National Catholic Reporter*, November 9, 2020 (accessed March 24) nronline.org/news/accountability/vaticans-mccarrick-report-timeline-events.

⁶ Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* (Vatican City: Vatican Press) sec. 226.

OROZCO: THE MCCARRICK REPORT AS A STEP IN RECONCILIATION AND REFORM

step in the healing and reconciliation of the Church. By reading both documents together, we can understand that instead of utter discord and crisis, Pope Francis sees what Sobrino refers to as “a hope that is made possible by reality itself.”⁷ Francis inspires in the Church a hope that reform of the structures that caused such sinful and criminal realities is not only necessary, but possible. In a new way, Pope Francis is inviting the whole Church to listen to the clamors of survivors and victims⁸ of the systems of domination in which we live.

Over ninety victims and other witnesses were cited in the report. Those interviewed are referred to anonymously as Priest 1, Priest 2, Mother 1, Father 1, etc., but are often directly quoted. The report is structured chronologically and thus highlights the resistances and prophetic witness of victim-survivors and their families throughout. It reminds us that victims and survivors did not only come forward after the #MeToo and #ChurchToo movements. The truth is that those movements came out of much longer struggles to be listened to, which the report points toward through interviews. One mother told of the way she sent several letters to the hierarchy of the Metuchen Diocese in the 1970s after becoming concerned with the way McCarrick, who she refers to as “Ted” throughout her testimony, related to her boys.⁹ James Grein, one of the more high profile victims of McCarrick and the first baby McCarrick ever baptized, has spoken out publicly to tell his story not only of the abuse, but of how many people he told who refused to act.¹⁰ The Report does not minimize the length of time in which

⁷ Jon Sobrino, “Spirituality and the Following of Jesus” in *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology*, ed. Ignacio Ellacuría (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1996), 240.

⁸ The terms “victim” and “survivor” will be used in different ways throughout this article. As a minister trained in trauma-informed care, I understand the importance of mirroring language so as to give agency back to those who experience sexual violence. The interchanging use of the words “victim,” “survivor,” and “victim-survivor” should not be taken as carelessness here, but rather as an attempt to not label any one experience of sexual violence as universal. The exception to this is that the word “victim” may be used at some points to emphasize the criminality of the offense(s) since “victim” is the word used in a court of law.

⁹ *The McCarrick Report* p. 38

¹⁰ David Porter, “Lawsuit: McCarrick victim told pope of sex abuse in 1988,” *Associated Press*, December 5, 2019 (accessed April 7, 2021) <https://bit.ly/3fUwVod>.

OROZCO: THE MCCARRICK REPORT AS A STEP IN RECONCILIATION AND REFORM

McCarrick was a serious threat to the most vulnerable. The report gives weight not only to the severity of the acts themselves, but also to the length of time it took to bring them to light and the cover-ups that ignored the problem. It positions the Church hierarchy as a learning subject, having committed errors time and time again. Survivors and victims, by sharing their experiences, become the teaching subjects and their acts of resistance against systems of oppression, including as prophets against the clerical Church, are uplifted and valued.

The radical transparency of the report also sheds light on many inner workings of the Church that had previously been kept out of the public's eye in a confused attempt to maintain trust in the Church. The ascension of bishops, for example, is little talked about by Francis's predecessors and is a conversation maintained in the upper-most spheres of power in the Church. The Canon Law that determines the appointment of the bishops makes the consultation of the "laity outstanding in wisdom" a mere option for the Pontifical legate. Further, the conference of bishops or ecclesiastical province that puts together the list of potential presbyters fit for the job does so "in secret."¹¹ In detailing the way McCarrick ascended, the Report exposed the Church at its most vulnerable points, giving evidence to how the rise of a pedophile was the result of more than simply McCarrick's actions, but also required an entire system which protected him. For Francis, the task of investigating and then publishing the results of the investigation, which showed a system that valued secrecy and hierarchy over communal discernment and true consultation, was a choice: a choice he made that differed from those of some of his predecessors.

We saw the potential fall out for this in the case of St. Pope John Paul II, who the report found to be personally responsible for the decision to elevate McCarrick to the Archbishop of Washington. The risk to the reputation and standing of the Church's canonization process was

¹¹ Can. 377 §1 and §3.

OROZCO: THE MCCARRICK REPORT AS A STEP IN RECONCILIATION AND REFORM

undoubtedly put at risk. News sources not explicitly in connection to the Catholic Church ran with the hypocrisy of a saint who made a bad decision. *The New York Times* headline read “Vatican Report Places Blame for McCarrick’s Ascent on John Paul II.” The article explains in great detail John Paul II’s decision to elevate McCarrick despite having evidence of his sleeping in the same bed with young seminarians.¹² A few paragraphs later, the article also argues that the report was trying to defend both John Paul II and his successor, Benedict XVI. The article ends with a slight insinuation that McCarrick’s fundraising capabilities were to credit for his ascension despite multiple reports of wrongdoing, stating “over the decades, Mr. McCarrick directed millions of dollars to John Paul II, Benedict and Francis for papal charities through his Papal Foundation.”¹³ The article is a damning portrayal to a secular audience. *The Washington Post* also interviewed several theologians on the canonization process in an article titled “Still saintly? Vatican’s new report on McCarrick may complicate the legacy of Pope John Paul II.”¹⁴ Then, of course, there were the contradicting headlines in Catholic news outlets. *America Magazine* ran an article titled “The McCarrick Report and Pope John Paul II: Confronting a Saint’s Tarnished Legacy” on the same day that *First Things* published one with the headline “Theodore McCarrick, Not John Paul II is the Story of the McCarrick Report.”¹⁵

In *Fratelli Tutti*, Francis cautions against a path to peace that aims only to keep up appearances and allows for injustice to continue. He writes that “truth, in fact, is an inseparable companion of justice and mercy.”¹⁶ The investigation and consequential public report opened the

¹² Jason Horowitz, “Vatican Report Places Blame for McCarrick’s Ascent on John Paul II,” *The New York Times*, November 14, 2020. (accessed March 26, 2021) <https://nyti.ms/3t26VuT>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Michelle Boorstein and Sarah Pulliam Bailey, “Still saintly? Vatican’s new report on McCarrick may complicate the legacy of Pope John Paul II,” *The Washington Post*, November 11, 2020 (accessed March 26, 2021) <https://wapo.st/3uxX6FA>.

¹⁵ Christopher White, “Will McCarrick report lead to further discipline, policy changes?,” in *The National Catholic Reporter*, November 11, 2020 (accessed March 26, 2021) <https://bit.ly/3fNcGZx>.

¹⁶ Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, sec. 227.

OROZCO: THE MCCARRICK REPORT AS A STEP IN RECONCILIATION AND REFORM

Church up, allowing for critics to take hold and for divisive rhetoric to occur. Despite this predictable outcome, Francis published the report and, if the length is telling at all, did not hold back. For Francis, the truth in its most clear format was prioritized over internal unity or concern for reputation.

Despite the media frenzy, Francis prioritized a public telling of reality as it is. Jon Sobrino, whose theology was formed in the context of serious questions of reconciliation in the wake of the Salvadoran Civil War, characterizes this prioritization of truth over appearance as “honesty with the real.”¹⁷ For Sobrino, this is deeply connected to our status as “beings-with-spirit.”¹⁸ That is to say that we participate in history as inherently spiritual beings.¹⁹ He writes further that the Church, by participating in this same history, must ask questions pertaining to spirituality.²⁰ From the place of being with spirit, we are called to be honest with the real, even when that reality is difficult or does not fit our agendas. To be honest with the real is to “not subject it to a violence calculated to adjust it to our own tastes and interests.”²¹ This honesty, Sobrino says, takes great spirit because sometimes it is not ignorance but in fact lies that cover reality.²² Sobrino writes, “Honesty to the real, fidelity to the real, and allowing ourselves to be carried forward by the real, are acts of the spirit that, in one form or another, by action or omission, every human being performs.”²³ We live as spiritual beings by our very status as being human, but we can choose to dishonor the reality by covering it up with lies. Alternatively, we can let ourselves be carried and guided by the truthful spirit. In our case here, the myth of

¹⁷ Jon Sobrino, *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology*, 234.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Jon Sobrino, *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology*, 237.

²³ Ibid., 241.

OROZCO: THE MCCARRICK REPORT AS A STEP IN RECONCILIATION AND REFORM

McCarrick's exceptional status is only a façade to cover the uncomfortable truth that his behavior was not stopped and, in some ways, was enabled by both individuals and structures.

Francis interprets Matthew 10:34-36 in *Fratelli Tutti* in order to argue that this connection to the real, this honesty with the real brought about by spiritual beings, is indeed how Jesus himself lived. In the passage, Jesus says that he has not come to bring peace but a sword, which will split up households, families, and neighbors. Francis says that this is Jesus calling for an utmost fidelity to follow him, even when it brings about inevitable hardship and conflict.²⁴ Jesus was not afraid of conflict, but it was never conflict for conflict's sake. There was a truth or a reality beyond the conflict that had to be reached.

Sobrino's theology adds onto Francis's understanding of the connection between being followers of Jesus and the honesty or fidelity to the real. For the Salvadoran theologian, following Jesus has not only a Christological dimension, but also a pneumatological dimension. As a Christological assertion, Sobrino's following of the Rabbi Jesus posits Jesus as not only *vere homo*, truly human being, but also as *homo verus*, the true, authentic, genuine human being.²⁵ We are most authentically human, then, when we are most like what Jesus is. Pneumatologically, the Spirit renders Jesus present in history, available in the concrete reality of human beings. Sobrino writes that "Jesus should be followed, continued, and updated in history—not imitated."²⁶ In other words, we do not merely decontextualize Jesus and seek to carry out his actions as he did, but instead we understand him as a model for our current historical situation. Jesus, Sobrino argues, is incarnated in the poor and is moved by the suffering of the poor. Compassion, Sobrino says, is therefore a demand of the reality itself. It precedes God, neither chronologically nor ontologically, but anthropologically, for the incarnated God,

²⁴ Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, sec. 240.

²⁵ Jon Sobrino, *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology*, 242.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

OROZCO: THE MCCARRICK REPORT AS A STEP IN RECONCILIATION AND REFORM

Jesus, was himself moved by reality. Jesus's own fundamental spirituality is therefore the act of allowing reality to move him. Jesus's option for the poor, therefore, comes from the very reality of the poor and from Jesus's own humanity.

For Pope Francis in the McCarrick Report, his option for the poor is the option for the victim-survivors of McCarrick. Just as Jesus is moved by his encounter with the poor, Francis is moved by the encounter with the victim-survivors of McCarrick. He makes an option for them because he understands that grave, criminal injustices were done toward them, and reconciliation is necessary. Forgiveness, though, does not require us to forget.²⁷ Instead, to move on, the memory of the injustice done must be an honest one. Authentic reconciliation, one that is not shallow or a falsity, is found in conflict that is open to dialogue and patient negotiation with both parties.²⁸

Sobrino helps us to illuminate further why bringing McCarrick's actions to light was indeed necessary for forgiveness and reconciliation. For Sobrino, as is the case with many liberation theologians, the presence of sin is rooted in the human heart; it is a part of reality. Forgiveness of the sinner is an act of love because to love someone is to humanize them.²⁹ Rooted in his Christology of Jesus as the genuine, true, authentic human being, Sobrino understands that to humanize a person means to bring them closer to Jesus. It is to facilitate their own status as being-with-spirit. It is to foster their recognition of the sin in their own heart so that it might change them.³⁰ It is not to allow the sinner to continue to sin or to engage in acts of misconduct, but instead to stop them from being able to harm again. The presence of sin and therefore sinners is a reality that causes Sobrino to say that what is needed is a "forgiveness of

²⁷ Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, sec. 250.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, sec 244.

²⁹ Jon Sobrino, "Latin America: Place of Sin and Place of Forgiveness" in *Principle of Mercy* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 59.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

OROZCO: THE MCCARRICK REPORT AS A STEP IN RECONCILIATION AND REFORM

the real.”³¹ Honesty and fidelity, being faithful to the real and exposing the truth, are a precursor to this forgiveness of the real. Forgiveness calls on us to change reality so that injustices might end or be mitigated. In *Fratelli Tutti*, Francis makes the almost identical argument:

We are called to love everyone, without exception; at the same time loving an oppressor does not mean allowing [them] to keep oppressing us, or letting [them] think that what [they do] is acceptable. On the contrary, true love for an oppressor means seeking ways to make [them] cease [their] oppression; it means stripping [them] of a power that [they do] not know how to use, and that diminishes [their] own humanity and that of others. Forgiveness does not entail allowing oppressors to keep trampling on their own dignity and that of others, or letting criminals continue their wrongdoing.³²

This forgiveness which exposes the reality of sin was one of the goals of The McCarrick Report for Francis. The conclusion of the report, the only part apparently penned by Francis himself, reads, “Looking back to the past, no effort to beg pardon and to seek to repair the harm done will ever be sufficient. Looking ahead to the future, no effort must be spared to create a culture able to prevent such situations from happening, but also to prevent the possibility of their being covered up and perpetuated.”³³ In other words, Francis, in shouldering the weight of the reality in front of him, has sought not to forgive McCarrick himself necessarily, allowing that to be a decision of the victim-survivors, but to “forgive the real.” He is pledging to change the future so that the presence of sin and misconduct might end or be mitigated. The report does not only expose McCarrick, it indeed exposes all oppressors, all clerics who have used the human structures of the Church to commit grave acts of violence and those who refused to act out against sin.

Sobrino finds great hope in this process of letting the Spirit guide us in being honest with the real, no matter where it leads. The hope comes from knowing that things can be different, that fulfillment is accomplished through history and, therefore, there is time and space for great

³¹ Ibid, 67.

³² Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, sec. 241.

³³ McCarrick Report p. 449

OROZCO: THE MCCARRICK REPORT AS A STEP IN RECONCILIATION AND REFORM

conversion. History, a cycle of misery and injustice, is always beaming with possibility. “Always there arises a new Exodus,” says Sobrino.³⁴ This is exactly what the McCarrick Report represents: the hope that conversion can happen. There is a future for this Church, filled with sinners and blessed with grace, in which sexual violence and lack of accountability are neither acceptable nor unimportant. When we hide from reality and lie to ourselves about what it really is, we stifle this great hope available to us. By continuing to maintain secrecy around the abuses of clerics, we do not allow true processes of reform to take hold.

By surveying these ninety people, survivors and their families, in order to get at the reality that calls us to reform, the report is a model of Francis’s call to be a listening Church to the marginalized, harmed, and oppressed. He writes in *Evangelii Gaudium* that without listening, no genuine spiritual encounter can occur. This again underpins that there is a need to listen to let the Spirit guide us through reality. In several speeches, as well as in several exhortations, Pope Francis has said that a listening Church is a synodal one. Synodality, in part of its most formal definition available to the Church right now, is “the action of the Spirit in the communion of the Body of Christ.”³⁵ Australian theologian Ormund Rush explains Francis’s notion of synodality in terms of an “inverted pyramid.”³⁶ In a new age for the reception of Vatican II, Francis recognizes a need for dialogue amongst all levels of the Church in order to reduce clericalism and mitigate possibilities for abuse of power. In this way, synodality can be taken as a process that walks through the honesty and fidelity of the real, bringing voices in and adding to our fragmentary knowledge sets, toward a forgiveness of the real, aiming to change the structures of the Church. This does not mean that sexual abuse will be solved proportional to a reduction of clericalism

³⁴ Jon Sobrino, “Spirituality and the Following of Jesus,” 239.

³⁵ International Theological Commission. *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*. 2 March 2018 https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_synodalita_en.html

³⁶ Ormund Rush, “Inverting the Pyramid: The Sensus Fidelium in a Synodal Church” in *Theological Studies* (2017) Vol. 78(2) 299–325

OROZCO: THE MCCARRICK REPORT AS A STEP IN RECONCILIATION AND REFORM

and an increased horizontal structure. However, it shows that Francis's larger goals and ecclesiological vision is to reform the Church so that abuses of power might be less prevalent. A spiritual encounter for the whole Church, healing, and reconciliation, are facilitated by this process.

On March 24, 2021, Pope Francis named Juan Carlos Cruz, a survivor of sexual violence in Chile to be a member of the Pontifical Council for the Protection of Minors.³⁷ This is a serious step in many ways, in part because Cruz is an outwardly gay man, but also because Cruz's trajectory with Francis is a particularly powerful story in forgiveness and reconciliation. In 2018, Francis rejected Cruz's accusations of sexual abuse, calling them slander. Eventually, in May of that year, a few months before Viganó's claims surfaced and after a lengthy investigation, Francis admitted he was wrong, invited Cruz to the Vatican, and apologized. Cruz, in several public events, has lauded Francis for his willingness to admit this. In bringing him on as a more formal advisor, there is a symbolic gesture of humility on behalf of Francis. Although it admittedly required scandal and overwhelming investigations for Francis to believe Cruz, the appointment represents a moment of listening and learning and a model of Church with these same attributes.

By walking readers through the inevitable question of "How did this happen?" the McCarrick Report sheds light on a painful reality that the Church had previously shied away from. Sobrino's understanding of spirituality as being intimately connected to concrete reality is therefore a hermeneutical key to interpret the link between the theology of conflict put forth in *Fratelli Tutti*, the McCarrick Report, and the larger cultural changes that Francis is bringing about in the Church. Francis is attempting to create a culture in which learning can occur,

³⁷ Gerard O'Connell. "Pope Francis names Juan Carlos Cruz, prominent abuse survivor and whistleblower, to Vatican panel," *America Magazine*. March 24, 2021. (Accessed April 7, 2021) <https://bit.ly/3uAleY6>

OROZCO: THE MCCARRICK REPORT AS A STEP IN RECONCILIATION AND REFORM

especially by those in power. By setting up structures that allow for listening, he is receiving the theology of Vatican II in a way that past pontiffs have not.

Pope Francis is welcoming the voices of those who have been silenced in the past by the Church itself so that the Church might be transformed and converted toward Jesus himself and the guiding force of the Spirit. Ultimately, the McCarrick Report has implications far beyond McCarrick or the U.S. Church. It represents a shift in the handling of crisis and a new outlook on truthful ways forward filled with hope instead of fear.

Works Cited

- Harlen, Chico. "Former Vatican ambassador says Popes Francis, Benedict knew of sexual misconduct allegations against McCarrick for years," *The Washington Post*, October 6, 2020. (Accessed March 24, 2021) <https://wapo.st/3msB9Vh>
- McElwee, Joshua J. "Francis orders 'thorough study' of Vatican archives on McCarrick," *The National Catholic Reporter*, November 9, 2020 (Accessed March 24, 2021) <https://bit.ly/3mpOTQV>
- McElwee, Joshua J. "The Vatican's McCarrick report: a timeline of events," *The National Catholic Reporter*, November 9, 2020 (Accessed March 24, 2021) nronline.org/news/accountability/vaticans-mccarrick-report-timeline-events.
- O'Connell, Gerard. "Pope Francis names Juan Carlos Cruz, prominent abuse survivor and whistleblower, to Vatican panel," *America Magazine*. March 24, 2021. (Accessed April 7, 2021) <https://bit.ly/3uAleY6>
- Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2021)
- Rush, Ormund, "Inverting the Pyramid: The Sensus Fidelium in a Synodal Church" in *Theological Studies* (2017) Vol. 78(2) 299–325
- Secretary of State of the Holy See. Report on the Holy See's Institutional Knowledge and Decision-Making Related to Former Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick (1930-2017) (Vatican City: Holy See, Secretary of State, 2020)
- Sobrinho, Jon. "Spirituality and the Following of Jesus" in *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology*. ed. Ignacio Ellacuría. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1996)

OROZCO: THE MCCARRICK REPORT AS A STEP IN RECONCILIATION AND REFORM

Sobrino, Jon. “Latin America: Place of Sin and Place of Forgiveness” in *Principle of Mercy*. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996)

Viganó, Carlo Maria. Testimony. 22 August 2019. (Accessed March 24, 2021)
<https://bit.ly/2Rhz439>

Toward a Synodal Parish: Practical Methods for Fostering Synodality

Mark Guevarra

Graduate Theological Union

Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University (Berkeley, CA)

Abstract

Pope Francis has recovered synodality as the method for being church in our fragmented and yet globalized world. Broadly, synodality refers to the involvement and participation of the whole People of God in the life and mission of the Church. This requires a spiritual and pastoral conversion towards receptive listening to all voices and an honest reading of the signs of the times. This paper proposes five practical methods to be employed in parishes by their pastoral teams. It draws from pedagogical practices from interfaith studies as well as elements from the Spiritual Exercises. By applying the methods, parishes discover living sources of moral wisdom in the experiences of listening that nourish siblinghood and sprout missional action.

Introduction

With preparations for the 2023 Synod of Bishops on synodality underway, it is imperative to present practical ways of becoming a synodal church. If synodality refers to the involvement and participation of the whole People of God in the life and mission of the Church,¹ then we need practical methods of listening to all voices, of honestly reading the signs of the times, and, importantly, of paths of spiritual conversion toward creative and courageous pastoral action. Pope Francis proclaims: “It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.”² While “the parish is no longer the primary gathering and social

¹ International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, March 2, 2018, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_synodalita_en.html

² Pope Francis, *Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops*, October 17, 2015, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html

center,”³ Pope Francis and many church leaders see a “renewed parish” as a site for synodality and synodal formation.⁴

The International Theological Commission’s 2018 document *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*⁵ is essential, as it outlines the history and theology of and a spirituality for synodality; however, the document does not include specific methods for its cultivation in the parish. In the United States in recent years, synods have been held in Detroit⁶ and San Diego. Both have been rich experiences of reading the signs of the times in their locales, and both have led to clear directions for the mission of the church in their respective contexts. However, neither synod offers a clear methodology for consultation, let alone the formation of a synodal people.⁷ Moreover, while Bishop Robert McElroy in a 2019 article provides a compelling argument for the need for synodality in the U.S. church, he does not provide a specific method for how that is to be done at a parish level.⁸ In May 2021, the Vatican shared its vision for the synod. Rather than a one-time event, there will be a two-year process of consultation at the diocesan, continental, and universal levels. The method, which includes discussion, remains to be defined, and there seems to be no plan for forming Catholics to engage in such a process.

In this paper, I will propose practical methods for parishioners to be formed synodally. I draw from proven pedagogical practices from interfaith studies as well as elements of the

³ Congregation for the Clergy, *Instruction: The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish Community in the Service of the Evangelizing Mission of the Church*, July 20, 2020,

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/07/20/200720a.html>

⁴ See *ibid.*, ITC *Synodality*, and Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation: Evangelii Gaudium*, November 24, 2013, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html

⁵ Hereafter, *Synodality*

⁶ See “Synod 16,” Archdiocese of Detroit, accessed July 15, 2021, <https://info.aod.org/articles/synod-16>.

⁷ While the 2016 synod in the Diocese of San Diego does offer “Questions for Deliberation at the Synod” it does not offer a specific methodology for equipping parishioners for contributing their experiences. See “Synod on the Family,” The Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego, accessed July 15, 2021, <https://www.sdcatholic.org/office-for-family-life-and-spirituality/synod-on-the-family/>.

⁸ Robert McElroy, “Bishop McElroy: US church is adrift, synodality can renew it,” *The National Catholic Reporter*, November, 7, 2019, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/bishop-mcelroy-us-church-adrift-synodality-can-renew-it>.

Spiritual Exercises from St. Ignatius.⁹ It is my hope that these practical methods of forming synodality, intentionally carried out by a committed pastoral team, will bring forward living sources of moral wisdom from the experiences of listening, especially to the poor, marginalized, and the earth, that sprout missional action, while fostering siblinghood that Pope Francis calls for in *Fratelli Tutti*.¹⁰

Step One: Setting the Groundwork and Casting a Vision

The first method sets the groundwork for the formation of a synodal parish. It begins with the discernment and decision of the pastoral team: pastor, other pastoral workers, and the parish pastoral council. It continues with a systematic presentation to the parish of what synodality is, why it is important, and the upcoming formation opportunities. This may include preaching, announcements, bulletin inserts, and other means of communication.

Setting the groundwork must involve placing the Eucharist at the center of synodal formation, as *Synodality* suggests.¹¹ From what the document calls “the Eucharistic synaxis” or the gathering around the Eucharist, the faithful develop dispositions that enable them to become aware that they are members of one Body of Christ, sent to encounter the poorest and most excluded.¹² This is primarily done through preaching. The pastor normalizes the reality of diversity of life experiences, theological views, political views, and even ideologies that exist within the parish. The priest provides models from scripture, the tradition of the church, and

⁹ These include a careful reflection of personal experiences including one’s emotions, of ordinary life, an attentiveness for a call and a thoughtful response, an awareness of the presence of God, a recognition of one’s uniqueness and unique context, and a movement towards selflessness and social justice. See “Ten Elements of Ignatian Spirituality” IgnatianSpirituality.com, accessed July 15, 2021, <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/what-is-ignatian-spirituality/10-elements-of-ignatian-spirituality/>.

¹⁰ While the focus of this paper is the formation of individuals within a parish, these methods may be applied between parishes and even at a diocesan level.

¹¹ ITC, *Synodality*, 6, 47, 70, 77, 108, 109.

¹² ITC, *Synodality*, 108.

GUEVARRA: TOWARD A SYNODAL PARISH

contemporary experiences of how individuals have navigated through differences. The goals here are to foster trust in God whose body has many views and to accept the Body of Christ as it is—diverse and yet united by the same spirit. Parishioners can be asked to agree to a covenant that articulates these goals.

With the basic groundwork of education and spirituality, the pastoral team can begin to define concrete goals that it seeks to achieve in the parish synodal experience. It can begin with reflecting on the parish's strengths, charisms, and areas of growth. It can continue with listening to parishioners in surveys and through dialogue in town hall meetings to discern the most pressing pastoral needs. After envisioning the goals, the parish team develops sign posts that name destinations on the synodal path. For example, one goal may simply be to affirm and celebrate the reality that the parish includes members who come from different ethnicities, backgrounds, and life experiences who hold different theological, political, and other ideological views. Another goal may be to acknowledge and celebrate the reality that amid these differences, we trust that the Holy Spirit continues to knit the parish together in unity.

Step Two: Self-Reflection and Listening

This method has two parts: self-reflection and listening. First, individual parishioners who choose to participate are invited to self-reflection. Participants journal their response to reflection questions built with elements of *Synodality* and the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises:

- a. Describe in detail a time when you encountered someone different from you (rich, middle-class, poor, or in between, someone who determined the margins or marginalized, or someone with opposing views than you, for example) that led to a transformational experience: your thoughts, feelings, and actions changed before the interaction and after. Describe what changed in how you relate to them and why this experience or person had the ability to transform.
- b. In general, how do you see yourself in relation to others, especially those who hold differing views than yourself?

GUEVARRA: TOWARD A SYNODAL PARISH

- c. What are your reasons for listening to the voices of others?
- d. Describe a time when you chose not to listen to another. What were your reasons? In general, what are reasons not to listen to the voices of others?
- e. What are strategies that may help someone to overcome an inability to listen to others?
- f. When you listen to the voices of others, what themes do you hear?
- g. When you listen to the voices of others, what structures of sin do you find?
- h. What comes to mind and to heart when you compare your responses in light of the belief that Christ is in the poor, that we are to love our enemies, that we are all siblings in God's family, that we members of the Body of Christ, and that we are called, equipped, and empowered to continue Christ's mission of healing and reconciliation?

As with the Spiritual Exercises, the goal here is to build self-awareness, to evaluate ourselves in light of God's grace, and to open ourselves to this grace. While guilt, pain, shame, and powerlessness may surface, these can be seen as fertile ground for forgiveness, healing, self-acceptance, and action. The ultimate goal of this method as well as the others is to help participants ground themselves in their senses in order to be responsive to the needs of others. Chapter Four of *Synodality* "refers to spiritual and pastoral conversion and to the communal and apostolic discernment that are necessary for an authentic synodal experience of Church."¹³ This is key; love of God and neighbor is related to love of self, as we also see in *Fratelli Tutti*'s interpretation of the Good Samaritan.

In the second part of this method, parishioners who have done the self-reflection join small groups in which participants are invited to share their responses. They may share as little or as much of their responses to the questions for self-reflection as desired. Listeners are not to respond to individual sharing; rather, they are encouraged to jot down notes and to be "mindfully aware of their breathing, physical sensations, and emotions."¹⁴ This space of sharing is one of vulnerability. Policies and procedures should be articulated to ensure the safety of the space.

¹³ ITC, *Synodality*, 10.

¹⁴ Wakoh Shannon Hickey and Margarita M. W. Suarez, "Meeting Others, Seeing Myself: Experiential Pedagogies in Interfaith Studies," in *Interreligious/Interfaith Studies: Defining a New Field*, ed. Eboo Patel (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), 115..

Moreover, facilitators must allot enough time for sharing so that all voices are heard in the small group and for the Holy Spirit to speak in the silence.

Here, the sharing of the response to the first question has much potential. Matthew Maruggi and Martha E. Stortz make a compelling argument for the unique role of narrative reflection as a signature pedagogy for interfaith studies. They follow Catholic moral theologian Richard M. Gula who claims that all transformation involves a repatterning of the imagination to attend to stories that make life worth living.¹⁵ In light of that, Maruggi and Stortz articulate an outline for an introductory course, an upper-level course, and a keystone course in interfaith studies that builds on narrative reflection pedagogy. While parish-level, intra-Catholic dialogue may not be as thorough and complex as an academic interfaith course, it is a proven method for making clear the diversity of individual experiences. I have adapted and integrated questions from the courses developed by Maruggi and Stortz with the questions from the self-reflection:

- a. Having heard the experiences of other participants who connected with someone different than them in terms of race, class, gender, oppression or held differing views, what resonates for you?
- b. Having heard how others fundamentally relate to others, what resonates for you?
- c. Having heard participants' reasons for listening to others, what resonates for you? What are common reasons among your group?
- d. Having heard participants' reasons *not* to listen to the voices of others, what resonates for you? What are common reasons among your group?
- e. Having heard strategies that help other participants overcome their inability to listen to others, what resonates for you? What are common reasons among your group?
- f. Having heard themes in listening to others, what comes to mind and heart for you?
- g. Having heard the structures of sin that are apparent, what comes to mind and heart for you? How might they be addressed by you, by this parish, by others? What obstacles stand in the way?
- h. What comes to mind and heart when you compare your responses in light of the belief that Christ is in the poor, that we are to love our enemies, that we are all siblings in God's family, that we members of the Body of Christ, and that we are called, equipped, and empowered to continue Christ's mission of healing and reconciliation?

¹⁵ Matthew Maruggi and Martha E. Stortz, "Teaching the 'Most Beautiful of Stories: Narrative Reflection as a Signature Pedagogy for Interfaith Studies,'" in *Interreligious/Interfaith Studies: Defining a New Field*, ed. Eboo Patel (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), 87.

Responding to these questions can be done individually or collectively. Either way, we find aspects of the Spiritual Exercises evident. First, while the Gospels may not necessarily be used or referred to, we hear the good news in the gospels that are the lives of the participants. Second, we hear examples of personal and social or structural sin. Third, we hear examples of transformation and discipleship. All this continues the deepening of knowledge of the other, connection with them, contemplation of God's will, and faithful action.

Step Three: Apostolic Dialogue—Humility, Empathy, Reflexivity, and Love

Rationale

The next two methods are adapted from three experiential pedagogies presented by Wakoh Shannon Hickey and Margarita M. W. Suarez. Worth noting are the goals of such pedagogies: humility, empathy, and reflexivity. For the authors, “intellectual and cultural humility means recognizing one’s own perspective or knowledge is limited.”¹⁶ Empathy entails imagining oneself in the place of others to understand them more fully.¹⁷ Reflexivity comes from the social sciences. It requires the researcher to become aware of their own social location—for example, their race, sexuality, gender, age, socioeconomic class, education level, religious background (or lack thereof), ethnic and cultural heritages, and regional upbringing.¹⁸ Hickey and Suarez recognize these three goals as necessary for tempering critical inquiry and as examples of transformation.

We find parallels to these goals in *Synodality*. First, the document recognizes humility as “an essential attitude in synodal dialogue.”¹⁹ Second, while it does not use the term empathy, it

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 110.

¹⁸ Hickey and Suarez, “Meeting Others, Seeing Myself,” 109-110.

¹⁹ ITC, *Synodality*, 112.

quotes another important document from the ITC, *Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church*, which provides a theological explanation of the necessary “attitudes summed up in the formula *sentire cum Ecclesia*; ‘to feel, sense, and perceive in harmony with the Church,’ which is, ‘the key to their walking together.’”²⁰ This definition certainly connotes empathy.

With respect to reflexivity, the teachings and ministry of Pope Francis have exposed various forms of privilege and sought to address them. From the first day of his papacy, he challenged the privilege of the papacy and the clergy. He has brought to the fore clericalism, a sin which stands opposed to synodality. He has challenged the privilege of certain dioceses to have cardinals, preferring to name cardinals from dioceses in the peripheries. He has spoken out consistently and regularly against racism, sexism, and to a degree homophobia. In *Laudato Si*, he exposed “the scandalous level of consumption in some privileged sectors of their population and [the need] to combat corruption more effectively.”²¹ Using the language of social location can help further expose and address privilege and oppression. While the remaining methods discussed below include this type of reflection, it can also be addressed in examinations of conscience, reconciliation liturgies, and other liturgies.

A rich scriptural foundation for these methods is the story of the Good Samaritan. In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis offers a call to action in his interpretation of the story. How we act politically, socially, or religiously is determined by whether or not we embrace the injured stranger on the side of the road. And, when we do so with humility, empathy, reflexivity, and

²⁰ International Theological Commission, *Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church*, June 2014, 90, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20140610_sensus-fidei_en.html.

²¹ Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter: Laudato Si*, May 24, 2015, 172, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

GUEVARRA: TOWARD A SYNODAL PARISH

love, we are “rebuilding our wounded world.”²² Francis reminds us that the story is not “morally abstract”²³ and that failure to love is a failure of our own dignity, making us a robber or a passerby.²⁴

Contemplative Dialogue

Sid Brown’s “careful conversation,”²⁵ what we might call apostolic dialogue, takes place after a period of group sharing. Here, participants select a conversation partner and engage in a careful conversation. Based on Brown, Hickey, and Suarez’s experience, the activity works best when participants with differing views are paired. This would be ideal in the parish setting. Here too, policies and procedures that foster a safe space for dialogue must be articulated, applied, and assessed. Most importantly, participants must be aware of the boundaries and limitations of each other and themselves. While participants are invited to lean into challenging perspectives, they must also be aware of when such perspectives are too difficult to bear. In Hickey and Suarez’s adaptation, “participants are encouraged to give mindful attention to their breathing, physical sensations, and emotions, and to refrain from interrupting; to answer from your emotions, not your intellect—usually with the first thing that comes to mind.”²⁶

In the entire process, but here in particular, it is helpful to keep in mind Pope Francis’ call for parrhesia: “The parrhesia of the Spirit required by the People of God on its synodal journey is the trust, frankness and courage to ‘enter into the expanse of God’s horizon’ in order to ‘ensure that a sacrament of unity exists in the world and that man is therefore not destined for dispersion

²² Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter: Fratelli Tutti*, October 3, 2020, 67, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html.

²³ Ibid., 68.

²⁴ Ibid., 67.

²⁵ Hickey and Suarez, “Meeting Others, Seeing Myself,” 114.

²⁶ Ibid., 115.

and confusion.”²⁷ This fourth method is an occasion for parrhesia—an open, honest, and courageous sharing—and should be framed by facilitators within the theology presented here. First, hearing a differing view brings us into the expansiveness of God’s horizon. Second, hearing a differing view is not to lead to dispersion but to unity, as “the lived and enduring experience of synodality is, for the People of God, a source of the joy promised by Jesus, a catalyst of new life, the springboard for a new phase of missionary commitment.”²⁸

Finding joy in another’s differing view is no doubt challenging, especially in a time of deep polarization; and yet, this is a task of synodality. The key to finding joy may be in a commitment to the Christian journey and mission of encounter. The document on synodality ends with the image of Mary and the disciples at Pentecost. It is a reminder that the Holy Spirit accompanies the People of God on their “synodal pilgrimage... pointing the way and teaching us the beautiful, tender, and strong style of this new phase of evangelization.”²⁹

Walking a Mile in Someone’s Shoes

An adaptation of Hickey and Suarez’s precept exercise, walking a mile in someone’s shoes invites participants to imagine or live out a belief held by another. Participants journal their experiences of imagination and after a period of time are invited back to their small groups to share them. In some respects, this resembles *Lectio Divina*, as participants actively engage their contemplative imaginations, in this case, from the perspective of their conversation partner.

It is important to name that this exercise may prove to be difficult for participants, especially in cases of vastly differing views or for those who have endured trauma. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis recognizes the wounds from historical divisions and the difficulty to accept forgiveness and reconciliation, “since they think that we are ignoring their pain or asking

²⁷ ITC, *Synodality*, 121.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

them to give up their memory and ideals,”³⁰ and yet he calls all people to be merciful and forgiving as God is. In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis is instructive about forgiving those who are oppressive:

Forgiveness does not entail allowing oppressors to keep trampling on their own dignity and that of others, or letting criminals continue their wrongdoing. Those who suffer injustice have to defend strenuously their own rights and those of their family, precisely because they must preserve the dignity they have received as a loving gift from God. If a criminal has harmed me or a loved one, no one can forbid me from demanding justice and ensuring that this person – or anyone else – will not harm me, or others, again. This is entirely just; forgiveness does not forbid it but actually demands it.³¹

This teaching makes clear the boundary in our engagement with the oppressor, and it can be applied to contemplative dialogue. The dignity of the participants must be preserved, and a dialogue may come to an end if one feels unsafe.

Pope Francis proposes that “the best way to move on” is to find authentic reconciliation “in conflict, resolving it through dialogue and open, honest and patient negotiation.”³² He invokes Pius XI: “Conflict between different groups ‘if it abstains from enmities and mutual hatred, gradually changes into an honest discussion of differences founded on a desire for justice.’”³³ These teachings are programmatic on the synodal path and should be applied even in an honest exercise of imagining oneself in the place of the other. In so doing, we can become aware of social location, privilege, and oppressions and struggle toward faithful missional action.

³⁰ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 100.

³¹ Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter: Fratelli Tutti*, October 3, 2020, 241, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html

³² *Ibid.*, 244.

³³ *Ibid.*

Step Four: Synodality in Action

The sixth method draws from the practice of ethnographic fieldwork. In this case, parish participants move from dialogue and imagination to a more incarnational practice. As they feel comfortable, and having built trust with their conversation partners, each may invite the other to their home for a meal. While this is an informal encounter, the guest is mindful of the context as an ethnographer. According to the custom of the host, they welcome the guest into their home. They might give the guest a tour, introduce them to family members, and offer them a refreshment. Conversation flows organically. After the experience, the guest reflects on the visit and journals their thoughts. After a period of time, the participants switch roles.

The intention here is obvious: to provide context and to deepen the knowledge of the other in a less formal atmosphere. Certainly, the necessary precautions and procedures should be taken for this encounter to be safe and enriching. Following this, participants return to their small groups and share their experiences. They then return to the original questions for self-reflection and consider how they have grown. They may consider creating a new narrative of encounter and transformation building off of their experiences. In a final gathering, facilitators summarize experiences, insights, challenges, and movements that have come from the entire experience. They present this to the pastoral team as a testimony of the synodal formation, the fraternity built, and as a source of moral wisdom. The pastoral team takes this as a springboard for missional action in the parish.

Step Five: Toward a Deeper Synodality

A final step for synodal formation involves assessment and recommendations for the parish. This may follow after the pastoral team has carried out strategies for addressing specific needs arising from the synodal formation. I suggest some starting points for a rubric:

GUEVARRA: TOWARD A SYNODAL PARISH

- a. Are there indications that parishioners relate to one another as siblings, concerned, receptive, and responsible for their needs?
- b. Are there signs that parishioners respect differences and are open to dialogue with one another?
- c. Are parishioners more involved in the life and mission of the parish?
- d. What else must be done to foster synodality and a deepening of it? What worked, what did not?

Such an assessment is essential if we are to continue to journey and grow on the synodal path. It would be helpful to frame the questions within an Ignatian Examen and to apply the results in the parish within later formation experiences, reconciliation liturgies, or at other appropriate times.

Most importantly, parishioners who have had formation for synodal life must now name and plan to carry out ways in which God is calling them to respond. Parish teams must be responsive to organizing and empowering the many responses that emerge. This may include connection with already existing ministries or development of new ones, which may require coordination with neighboring parishes or organization at the diocesan level.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have proposed several practical methods to cultivate synodality in the parish with application at the diocesan and other levels. Embedded in these proven approaches are elements of discernment found in St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises: a careful reflection of personal experiences including one's emotions, a careful reflection of ordinary life, an attentiveness for a call and a thoughtful response, an awareness of the presence of God, a recognition of one's uniqueness and unique context, and a movement towards selflessness, community, and social justice. These are crucial in addressing Pope Francis's observations of the Synod on the Amazon, in which "there was a discussion... a rich discussion... a well-founded discussion, but no discernment, which is something different from arriving at a good and

GUEVARRA: TOWARD A SYNODAL PARISH

justified consensus or relative majority.”³⁴ And so, it is my hope to test these methods of synodal formation and discernment and improve them accordingly. Ultimately, I aim to develop a parish manual that includes liturgies and prayers, videos, books, and other resources to enrich the formation experience. For now, I present them as a practical means to respond to Pope Francis’s call in *Fratelli Tutti*, to heal our wounded world and our wounded siblings.

Works Cited

- The Archdiocese of Detroit. “Synod 16.” Accessed July 15, 2021, <https://info.aod.org/articles/synod-16>.
- Congregation for the Clergy. *Instruction: The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish Community in the Service of the Evangelizing Mission of the Church*. July 20, 2020. <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/07/20/200720a.html>
- IgnatianSpirituality.com. “Ten Elements of Ignatian Spirituality.” Accessed July 15, 2021. <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/what-is-ignatian-spirituality/10-elements-of-ignatian-spirituality/>
- International Theological Commission. *Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church*. June 2014. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20140610_sensus-fidei_en.html
- _____. *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*. March 2, 2018. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_en.html
- McElroy, Robert. “Bishop McElroy: US church is adrift, synodality can renew it.” *The National Catholic Reporter*, November, 7, 2019. <https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/bishop-mcelroy-us-church-adrift-synodality-can-renew-it>.
- Patel, Eboo. ed. *Interreligious/Interfaith Studies: Defining a New Field*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2018.
- Pope Francis. *Apostolic Exhortation: Evangelii Gaudium*. November 24, 2013.

³⁴ Antonio Spadaro, “Francis’ Government: What is the driving force of his pontificate?” *La Civiltà Cattolica*, October 14, 2020, <https://www.laciviltacattolica.com/francis-government-what-is-the-driving-force-of-his-pontificate/>.

GUEVARRA: TOWARD A SYNODAL PARISH

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html

. *Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops*. October 17, 2015.

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html

. *Encyclical Letter: Laudato Si*. May 24, 2015.

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

. *Encyclical Letter: Fratelli Tutti*. October 3, 2020.

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html

The Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego. "Synod on the Family." Accessed July 15, 2021.

<https://www.sdcatholic.org/office-for/family-life-and-spirituality/synod-on-the-family/>.

Spadaro, Antonio. "Francis' Government: What is the driving force of his pontificate?" *La Civiltà Cattolica*, October 14, 2020. <https://www.laciviltacattolica.com/francis-government-what-is-the-driving-force-of-his-pontificate/>.

Author Biographies

Aaron Bohr, SJ



Aaron Bohr is a Jesuit of the U.S. Midwest Province entering his third year of theology studies at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California. Prior to becoming a Jesuit, Aaron taught Mandarin and world history at his high school alma mater in St. Paul, Minnesota. In his free time, Aaron enjoys reading, writing, playing the piano, and walking in the Berkeley Hills.

Elise Dubravec



Elise Dubravec is a third year M.Div. student at the Jesuit School of Theology. She received her B.A. in Sociology and Religious Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She then served as a youth minister and Confirmation catechist within the diocese of Joliet, IL. She completed her M.Div. field placement with FutureChurch and the University of San Francisco's Joan and Ralph Lane Center for Catholic Social Thought and the Ignatian Tradition.

Amirah Orozco



Amirah Orozco is originally from the border between El Paso, Texas and Juárez, Chihuahua. She is a recent graduate of the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry where she earned her Master's in Theological Studies. She focused on Hispanic theologies with a special interest in ecclesiological themes, mujerista theology, and other decolonial theologies. She is now a University Minister at Dominican University in Chicago where she ministers with Latine students as Co-Program Coordinator for Ministry en lo Cotidiano.

Mark Guevarra



Mark Guevarra is a PhD student in the department of theology and ethics at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. His interests include synodality and LGBTQ+ ministry and inclusion in the Catholic Church. Mark is a former teacher, catechist, college instructor, and pastoral associate.

Call for Papers

New Horizons:

A Peer-reviewed Graduate Journal

Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University

Volume 6 Issue 1: Whose Voice? Whose Church?

In October 2021, Pope Francis will open a synodal process marked by three phases: diocesan, continental, and universal. The structure of this synodal journey is emblematic of Francis's desire to encounter the periphery and to listen to the faithful, something at the core of the concept of synodality. Synodality, as defined by the International Theological Commission in 2018, is "the action of the Spirit in the communion of the Body of Christ and in the missionary journey of the People of God."

In Volume 6 Issue 1, *New Horizons* invites submissions on the themes of discernment, power, participation, and authority in the church. Whose voices are we listening to, and whose voices go unheard? Whose church is encountered, and whose church goes underrepresented? Where does the local position end, and where does the universal begin? What sources do the faithful draw on to define Christianity for themselves and for others? How do we discern together and with the Holy Spirit toward a more integrated and collaborative understanding of church?

The Journal invites pastoral, academic, and multimedia submissions that provide theological reflection on biblical, ecclesial, and moral authority and the ways that they might intersect with the following: feminist and womanist theology and ethics; Catholic Social Teaching; ecclesiology and Vatican II; prayer, pilgrimage, and missional spirituality; participation in the local parish; power analysis and liberation theology; migration, globalization, and nationalism; environmental ethics and care for the Earth; faith, politics, and the public square.

While these prompts are meant to guide submissions, they are not limiting in their scope. The Journal warmly invites any papers emerging from reflections on the themes of synodality.

Academic papers should be formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style, 17th. Ed., and comprise between 2,000-4,000 words. Homilies and pastoral reflections are held to the same word count. Poetry, prayer, artwork, and photography are highly welcomed components of the journal.

Submissions should be uploaded by 5pm on November 1, 2021 to newhorizonsjst@scu.edu. Accepted submissions will be published in February 2022. Please email bkozee@scu.edu with any questions or inquiries.

Graphic design by Natalie Nielsen
nataliegracenielsen.com



NEW HORIZONS
Volume 5 Issue 2